M. L.

DIARY OF JOHN JOSEPH CALLISON

OREGON TRAIL 1852

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LANE COUNTY PIONEER-HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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SOME FAMILY RECORDS

of

THE CALLISON FAMILY

The Callisons came from Albemarle County, Virginia, to Adair County, Kentucky. They then went to Hancock County, Illinois, arriving there in 1832. Two sons, with their families went on to Lane County, Oregon, Robert Callison in 1848 and Gilmore Callison in 1852.

Hiram Callison, with Washington's army at Valley Forge. Third generation in America from Scotland. Probably father of Joseph, (below)

Joseph Callison. born Dec. 29,1776. Died April 2, 1854. Married in 1801, Lincoln County, Kentucky, Susanna Dawson. She was born April 12, 1777 and died August 30th, 1823.

Children of Joseph and Susanna.

1. William, born Jan. 15, 1802 in Illinois. Died Dec. 7, 1869 at Crooked river, Calif.
2. Charity, born Dec. 30, 1803
3. John, born Sept. 19, 1805
4. James, born April 12, 1807. Died Sept. 14,1814
5. Gilmore, born Dec. 22, 1808. Died March 22, 1869
6. Josiah, born Dec. 2, 1810
7. Nancy, born Sept. 19, 1812
8. Polly, born Jan. 5, 1815
9. Susannah, born June 11, 1816
10. Robert, born June 5, 1818 , last child of Joseph and his first wife, Susannah.

Children of Joseph and _____, his 2nd wife.

1. James (2) born probably Sept.2, 1826.
2. Martha Ann born March 2, 1828
3. Charles Anderson, born Jan. 9, 1830.
4. Phebe born Dec. 11, 1831.

Gilmore Callison, born Dec.22, 1808, Adair Co. Ky. Died Eugene, Lane County, Oregon, March 22, 1869. Married his first wife, Elizabeth McClure October 29, 1829. He and Joseph Gilmore moved to Illinois in 1833 and established the first Christian church in Hancock co. Illinois, the following year at the home of Gilmore Callison. Both Callisons and Gilmores were of Scotish descent. John McClure, Josiah Callison and Green Browning were co-founders of this church. Gilmore Callison and his family followed his younger brother, Robert, to Oregon in 1852. His eldest son, writer of the attached diary, died of cholera during the crossing of the plains.

Children of Gilmore and Elizabeth:

1. John Joseph, Born Aug. 13,1830, died Aug.23, 1852
2. William Thomas, born Oct. 14, 1832, died in Calif. Married Rebecca Linder, Sept. 22, 1853 by his father, the Rev. Gilmore Callison.
3. Susan Ann born March 11, 1835, Hancock Co. Ill died Dec. 7, 1895 in Calif. Married Levi Linder
4. James David, born July 1, 1837, Hancock Co. Ill. died July 16, 1871, Butte Disappointment, Ore. Married Catherine Harris.
5. Rufus Gilmore, born Dec. 24, 1839, Hancock Co.Ill. Died July 7, 1915, Turner, Oregon, while preaching there. Married Martha Willis Nov.15 1868.
6. George Hardin born Feb. 24, 1842, Hancock Co. Ill. Died in state of Washington.Married Mary Ellen

Fisher Jan. 1, 1868 in Lane County, Oregon.

7. Robert Marshall, born Nov. 15, 1844, Hancock Co. Ill. Died Sept. 27, 1930. Married Minerva Fisher in 1864

8. Amanda Elizabeth born July 26, 1848, Hancock Co.Ill. Died Dec 9, 1938, in state of Washington. Married William Henry Harrison McClure, son of V.S. Mc Clure.

Elizabeth McClure, wife of Gilmore Callison died a month after reaching Oregon and on May 15, 1853 Gilmore remarried Mrs Eliza Linder, of Pleasant Hill. Wm.W. Bristow performed the ceremony. A great many of the early Lane county marriages were performed by Gilmore Callison.

Robert Callison, born June 5, 1818, last child of Joseph and his first wife, Susannah Dawson, married McDonough Co. Ill. Dec. 15, 1839 to Mary Ann (Polly) Bristow, born Oct. 28, 1820 Cumberland Co. Kentucky. She was the daughter of Elijah Bristow, early Lane County, Oregon pioneer, and she and her husband came to Oregon in 1848 with the Bristow family. Robert Callison died in Lane county, Jan. 16, 1906.

Children of Robert and Polly

1.
2. Joseph, died in Illinois before family came west with Mrs Elijah Bristow and family.

3. Josiah

4. Henriette, died Lane co. 1858, aged 12

5. Marriette, died Lane co. 1865, aged 3

6. Lucetta, born 1855, died March 28, 1942.Married Howard Baughman, son of Samuel and Elizabeth McCall Baughman, in 1870.

DIARY OF JOHN JOSEPH CALLISON

Oregon Trail 1852.

1852

April sixth. Tuesday morning, clear and warm:started to Oregon and traveled fourteen miles and stopped at Uncle Hosiah Callison's 2 days. Corn 30cts. hay 50cts per hundred.

9th came to Warsaw, paid 20cts per bu for oats, 30cts for corn and crossed the Mississippi. 50cts per hundr. Rainy night.

10th Traveled 8 miles over very muddy roads and camped at McVoys, ½ of a mile south of the road until the 12th.Corn 35cts. hay 35cts.

12th traveled 18 miles and encamped at the Harmony House, occupied by Resor. Corn 30cts. hay 50cts. Weather cool, mud drying up.

13th Traveled 18 miles to Dowel's. Corn 50cts per shock.

14th Traveled 6 miles to Mestes's and encamped and washed 1 mile this side of Dover, nicknamed Stringtown. Corn 40cts. threshed oats 22cts. Sheaf oats 15cts per dozen.

15th traveled 20 miles, passed through Drakeville and encamped at McCrakens, rainy night, hay 30cts.

16th Traveled twelve miles, passed through Unionville, took the right hand road and encamped on Soap Creek and turned our cattle out to grass for the first time. Corn 75cts.

17th Cool and rainy. Traveled 2 miles and turned off the road and went 8 miles over a very bad road and encamped at Edward Bryant's on a branch of the Charitan river. no corn.

18th Traveled 1½ miles to the Chariton bottom to graze our cattle, grass short and thin, remained there until 21st, country considerably broken.

21st Traveled 7 miles, up the bottom, fine day, very good grazing, etc.

22nd Traveled 12 miles, passed through Dodge's Point and encamped at the ford of Charitan River. corn $1.00

23rd Rainy, traveled 14 miles to the head of a branch of the Charitan on the left side of the road, grass very thin and short. no corn.

24th Traveled 21 miles. Passed through Garden Grove and encamped on a branch of Grand river, all Mormans, the women dressed in Bloomer costume. corn $1.00

25th Traveled 18 miles and encamped at Harris' on the prairie, no corn. Prairie hay 75 cts per hundred.

26th Traveled 16 miles, very cool, rainy and sleeting, cool enough for us to drive all day with our overcoats on. no corn, grass on uplands no better than it was when we started from home, encamped 6 miles east of Pisgah on a small stream.

April 27th Traveled 18 miles through Pisgah, bought sheaf oats at 50cts per dozen and encamped on the prairie, fine weather.

28th Traveled 18 miles and encamped on the prairie.

29th Traveled 15 miles and encamped on another branch of the Grand River at Johnson's. corn $2.00 a bushel. did not buy any.

30th Traveled 20 miles and encamped on a creek, cool and rainy, corn 75 cts per bushel.

May 1st Saturday, Traveled 18 miles, crossed eastern Ishnabotny, forded and passed through Indian town inhabited by Mormans and encamped on the prairie, fine weather and good roads.

May 2nd rained in the forenoon, traveled 16 miles and encamped on a small stream one mile this side of Wheeler's Grove. corn 50cts.

May 3rd. Traveled 15 miles, ferried our wagons and swam our cattle across Western Ishnabotny and overtook Bristow and Newingham on Silver Creek and encamped there, corn 30cts, hay 20cts.

May 4th Traveled 16 miles and encamped on Mosquito creek 1½ miles from Hanesville.

May 5th Lay by. rained hard in evening and all night. Seen several Indians, corn 25cts, bought four tons of hay. $2½ per ton, paid $2 for a pasture for our cattle.

May 6th Traveled 6 miles down the bottom and encamped at Johnathan Browning's on Mosquito Creek, fine weather and good grass, corn 25cts. lay by until 12th. Gilfrey's company of wagons (6) came up on the 8th. Shelly's came up on the 12th.

12th Traveled 10 miles down the river and crossed at Platville, ferriage $8.50. rainy evening.

13th lay by on account of its being so windy the balance of the company could not cross.

14th lay by. Company all got across the river. Plenty of Indians of the Ottoe tribe. Friendly.

15th Saturday. Left the Missouri River and started across the plains, Fine day. passed through an Indian village 2 miles from the river. traveled 18 miles and encamped on the prairie.

16th traveled 16 miles, encamped on a small creek in the edge of the prairie, cold and windy. (very windy)

17th Traveled 20 miles, crossed Salt river, the water tastes a little saltish. It is a very pretty stream about fifty yards wide and eighteen to twenty inches deep, encamped on the prairie, clear and cool, good roads.

18th Traveled 20 miles and encamped on the prairie. two Pawnee Indians encamped with us and slept in our tent. very crooked road.

19th Wednesday. Traveled 21 miles encamped on the prairie, wood and water very scarce. Had to burn some weeds for to cook with, and carry water half a mile.

20th Traveled 20 miles and encamped on the Platte bottom, grass tolerably good, water very indifferent.The

Platte river is, I suppose from a quarter of a mile to 2 miles in width and very shallow, being about 2 or 3 feet deep. It is very sandy and the water is hardly fit to drink but is generally considered healthy and the United States troops are not allowed to use any other but the waters of the Platte. A whole caravan if caravan it might be called, of Indians, upward of 100 I suppose came along after we had camped, some of them passed by and some camped close to us. They had been out on a hunting excursion and were returning to their village in high spirits with their mules and ponies well laden with meat. They were well armed and so are all the Pawnees that I have seen.

21st Traveled 7 miles up the bottom, commenced raining yesterday evening, rained all night and very hard all day today. Passed by where more troops were encamped and let them have 4 bushels of corn. They were going down the Platte to arrange a difficulty between the Indians and emigrants and bring the Indians to justice.

22nd Traveled 20 miles, grass very poor, passed by an old deserted Indian village in the afternoon and got plenty of good dry cedar wood there. This village has, I suppose, been evacuated since the hard winter of 1848-49 their ponies all died off during that winter and they took and formed a square with them. There is now 63 of them and they are bleached perfectly white. Met about a dozen Shian Indians this evening who were going down the river after one of their company that the Pawnees had killed and to kill as many Pawnees as they could.

23rd Sunday. Traveled 25 miles, most of the road

very heavy and sandy, short grass, day clear and warm, timber scarce. There is not near as much timber on the Platte as I had expected. It has a great many islands in it which are all covered with willow and cottonwood. and there are groves of timber here and there along the banks of the river but it is nearly all cottonwood and willow brush.

24th Traveled 10 miles and stopped to wash. Fine day. Another company of Shian Indians encamped within 100 yards of us. They were going down to settle the difficulty between them and the Pawnees and get as many Pawnee scalps as they could.

25th Tuesday. Traveled 22 miles and encamped on a slough and had to use the water out of it. Had one of our oxen stolen last night by an emigrant. We rode on and overtook them and got him five miles from camp.

26th Traveled 20 miles, passed through Fort Kearney and encamped two miles this side. Fort Kearney is beautifully situated on the Platte bottom about two miles from the river. It has four or five good-looking frame houses, two stories high and several sod houses which look very well, two or three of them, I should suppose were 50 or 60 feet long. The troops all are decently dressed and the captain appears to be very much of a gentleman.

27th Thursday. Traveled 15 miles, crossed over to the north side of the Platte in the evening. The width of the stream where we crossed was supposed to be from 2 to 2½ miles wide. The crossing of this stream was very hard upon

both men and teams. It was from 6 inches to between 3 and 4 feet deep.Crossing of this stream is very hard upon a wagon as the sand is continually rolling from under the wheels, which keeps the wagon rocking as if it were running over rocks as large as a man's fist all the time. It had been a very warm day and the best grass we have had for a week.

28th Friday, Traveled 20 miles and encamped on the bottom near the river. No wood, grass short, fine day, clear and warm, roads very sandy and heavy.

29th Traveled 20 miles and encamped on the bottom one mile south of the road, grass short but thick, wood scarce. Buffalo chips very plnety.

30th Traveled 14 miles, weather very warm.Encamped about half a mile south of the road on the river.

31st. Lay by on account of sickness.Absolom Newingham very bad with cholera, nearly half the company down with diarrhea, some very bad.Very poor water to drink and exceedingly warm weather.

June 1st Absolom Newingham still getting worse,died half past two o'clock and we traveled 4 miles this evening to a spring of very good water and encamped.

2nd Traveled 6 miles and stopped at eleven o' clock on account of Josephine Bristow's being very sick, she still continues to grow worse, died at half past four o'clock. The rest of the company but very little better.

(June) 3rd Traveled 20 miles and encamped near the river, passed a boiling spring of first rate water in the afternoon.

June 4th Traveled 20 miles and encamped where the North Loup river empties into the Platte. David very sick and has been for several days.

5th Saturday. Traveled 20 miles over a very sandy road and encamped on the bottom to rest David who is still very poorly, turned cool and rained a little in the evening. Very good grass.

6th Traveled 14 miles over a very sandy road and encamped on the bottom.

7th Traveled 21 miles over a very good road. David commenced mending.

8th Traveled 19 miles road tolerably good,grass good but short.

9th Traveled 23 miles and encamped near the river,grass short.

10th Traveled 20 miles, came over the Cobble hills and passed by the ancient bluff ruins, so called from their resemblance of ancient castles and fortifications. Day very clear and warm, grass tolerably good.

11th Friday, Traveled 25 miles and encamped near the river about 4 or 5 miles above the Chimney Rock.This rock, as it is called, is on the south side of the river. It is a great curiosity. It is said to be 300 feet high when it was first discovered but I do not suppose it is more than half as high now as it was then.

(June) 12th Traveled 20 miles and camped on Spring Creek, fine day, passed by Scotts Bluff in the afternoon. They are another great natural curiosity. And are on the south side of the river also. Some of them resemble buildings, some one thing and some another.

13th Traveled 6 miles and encamped on the river, grass poor, no chips, had to burn sage roots, a very good substitute for wood.

June 14th Traveled 14 miles over a heavy road. Dr. Bristow's wagon turned over in the evening. No damage done.

15th Traveled 20 miles and encamped near the river within 2 miles of Fort. Laramie.

16th Traveled 25 miles, most of the way through the Black Hills. Roads are very bad. The hills, none of them are very high, rugged and rocky. They are covered mostly with short, scrubby cedar and pine which give them a dark appearance at a distance, encamped near the river.

17th Thursday, Traveled 20 miles and encamped on the prairie. Roads tolerably good today and grass also. Warm days and cool nights.

18th Traveled 20 miles and camped near the river. Grass good.

19th Traveled 20 miles and encamped near the river. Very poor grass. Road very sandy, rocky and dusty.

20th Traveled 18 miles, about 8 miles of it a very rough, rocky road, the rest of the road tolerably good but sandy, grass poor.

21st. Traveled 20 miles and encamped in a grove

near the river. Grass poor. Roads tolerably good but dry and dusty. There is some appearance of rain this evening.

22nd Tuesday, traveled fifteen miles and encamped near the river. Rainy evening. Grass very poor.

23rd. Traveled 20 miles. Passed the upper Platte ferry at noon and started across what is called the desert, which is 30 miles. No grass or water except alkali, until you arrive at the Willow Springs.

June 24th Traveled 20 miles and encamped at Willow Springs. Rainy day, good water, good grass 2 miles from the road.

June 25th Traveled 21 miles and encamped on Sweetwater River, near Independence Rock.

The diary ends here. John J. Callison died August 23, 1852 of Cholera and was buried near the Oregon Trail in the vicinity of the present town of La Grande, Oregon. The reason his diary ceases for the last two months of his life is unknown. He had been born August 13th, 1830, son of Gilmore Callison and Elizabeth McClure with whom he had started across the plains to Oregon in 1852. He was unmarried.